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# Kentucky Derby foods to please even most royal of tastes

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### DERBY DOZEN

USA TODAY's Tom Pedulla rates the top contenders on the road to the May 5 Kentucky Derby at Churchill Downs. Last week's ranking in parentheses:

1. **Scat Daddy (1)**: Must handle a five-week layoff
2. **Street Sense (4)**: Terrific work this week
3. **Nobiz Like Shobiz (2)**: Comes off Wood victory
4. **Curlin (3)**: Inexperience is the only knock
5. **Circular Quay (5)**: Hasn't run since March 10
6. **Any Given Saturday (6)**: Eligible to improve
7. **Zanjero (7)**: Live long shot
8. **Great Hunter (8)**: Better than last start suggests
9. **Cowtown Cat (9)**: Illinois Derby champ
10. **Chelokee (10)**: Dangerous if he qualifies
11. **Tiago (11)**: Boasts a late kick
12. **Dominican (NR)**: All of his wins are on Polytrack

By [Jessie Halladay](#), USA TODAY

To prepare for the premium meals at Saturday's Kentucky Derby, chef Gil Logan has traveled the Bluegrass State looking for the best tomatoes, the rarest Appalachian honey and the freshest shiitake mushrooms.

He planned the meal last June for the 21,000 people sitting in the most expensive Churchill Downs seats.

Then, just a couple of months ago, he heard he'd have a royal guest — Queen Elizabeth II.

"We'd already prepared a meal fit for a queen," Logan says. "I want everybody to feel like her that day ... to feel like royalty at the Derby."

Logan, the head chef for Levy Restaurants at Churchill Downs, crafted a meal he says tastes like spring in Kentucky, using ingredients such as bibb lettuce, pole beans and mint.

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Logan submitted the menu to Buckingham Palace for review.

It boasts a lineup that includes barbecued shrimp, a bibb salad with strawberries, almonds and feta cheese, a country cassoulet of chicken, duck and black-eyed peas, chicken breast with shiitake mushroom cream sauce and pole beans. It finishes off with mint-julep strawberries with spring biscuits for dessert.

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"They love what we do with all natural Kentucky foods," he says.

Churchill Downs kitchens thrive with Kentucky products, part of the Kentucky Proud effort that Logan champions. He tries to secure as many Kentucky-produced products as possible, which sometimes requires months of planning to make sure cheeses are aged properly or enough tomatoes are grown in hothouses throughout the state. This year all dairy products at the track are Kentucky-produced.

One thing Logan hadn't prepared for was the possibility of having to serve high tea — a daily tradition for her majesty.

Not wanting to be unprepared in case the queen asks for tea, he joined forces with a Louisville tea expert and blended a special version of Earl Grey. "I'm not going to be the guy who's not ready," Logan said.

Should she ask, the tea will be served with special shortbread cookies designed in honor of Barbaro, last year's Derby winner who died after battling a Preakness injury for months.

While Logan is excited to have the honor of serving the queen, he's equally excited about the approximately 120,000 who will be eating from concession stands and other kitchens at Churchill that day. Much of what they eat will also come from Kentucky farms.

Kentucky pork and beef producers will set up in the infield to help serve thousands of hot dogs, pulled pork and other meaty treats for those in the cheapest seats.

"There's no energy like Derby," Logan says. "There's nothing more I could have done, or I would've done it."

*Jessie Halladay also writes daily for The (Louisville) Courier-Journal.*

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